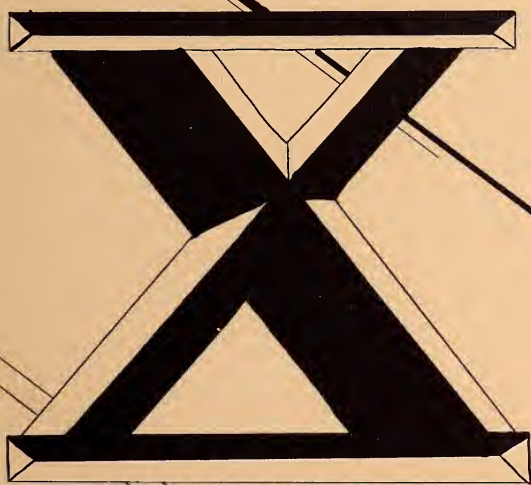


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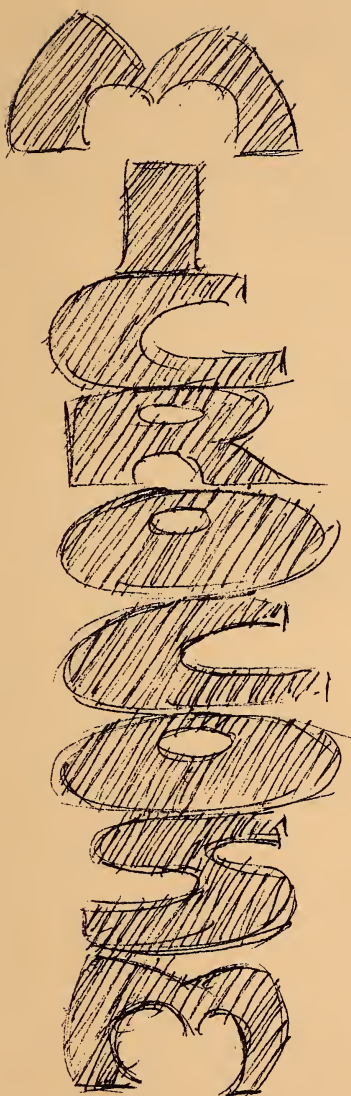


Spring, 1983



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Cover Design
Frontispiece

Duane Derrick
Norman Cupit

Uncle Oscar Jolly

Uncle Oscar Jolly is a self-ordained Primitive Baptist preacher, whose religion is rich in tradition and appeals to the poor. South Mississippi is Uncle Oscar Jolly's private territory. He travels from county to county in his late model Lincoln Continental, washing feet in tin tubs and baptizing sinners in muddy rivers and ponds. From river banks and pond dams or modestly built churches, he delivers emotionally charged sermons to a few faithful believers. Drama is his greatest tool. He produces fear and excitement with his thunderous voice, and his black funeral suit adds to the ominous image he wants to create.

Uncle Oscar Jolly directs his congregation as well as an experienced conductor directs his finely tuned orchestra. He motivates his flock into fevered tempos and a grand finale. I haven't witnessed a performance of his in years and I'm looking forward to it. At eighty, Uncle Oscar Jolly is the last of a dying breed: he is a circuit preacher.

On a hot, muggy Sunday morning in August, I drive the dusty backroads to the little town of Pinola, Mississippi, to hear Uncle Oscar Jolly deliver one of his masterful performances and have the customary dinner-on-the-ground. A plain lady with seamed stockings welcomes me at the front steps and urges me to sit next to an open window because there are no ceiling fans in the Pinola Primitive Baptist Church. But the Pinola Chevrolet dealer has graciously furnished hand fans with a colorful picture of Jesus on one side and the president of Pinola Chevrolet on the other. It's 11:00 a.m. by the Coca-Cola clock over the piano and the Farm Bureau thermometer which hangs on the front of the lectern reads 94 degrees. Uncle Oscar Jolly says he has to quit preaching when it reaches 100 degrees because someone might have a heat stroke from getting so red-hot with excitement. People fill the pews greeting one another in the name of the Lord and sharing trivia of the past week. A queen size lady squeezes past me and shuffling behind her is a small, lean boy with slicked down hair, smelling of sweet lilac. The lady drops to her seat bouncing me against the hard wooden bench. The little boy settles next to me as Uncle Oscar Jolly steps up to the pulpit. Silence reigns over the congregation except for the soft whimper of a baby. All children are good in his church; their bodies are still: only their eyes move. They are aware of this man's power.

Uncle Oscar Jolly steps up to the lectern and starts his sermon with the same words he has used for the past fifty-seven years. "Brothers and sisters, we are gathered in this House of God on this fine Sunday morning in the name of Jesus Christ, Lord and Master, King of Kings, the One who rules above all others, Amen. Do i hear Amen?" A

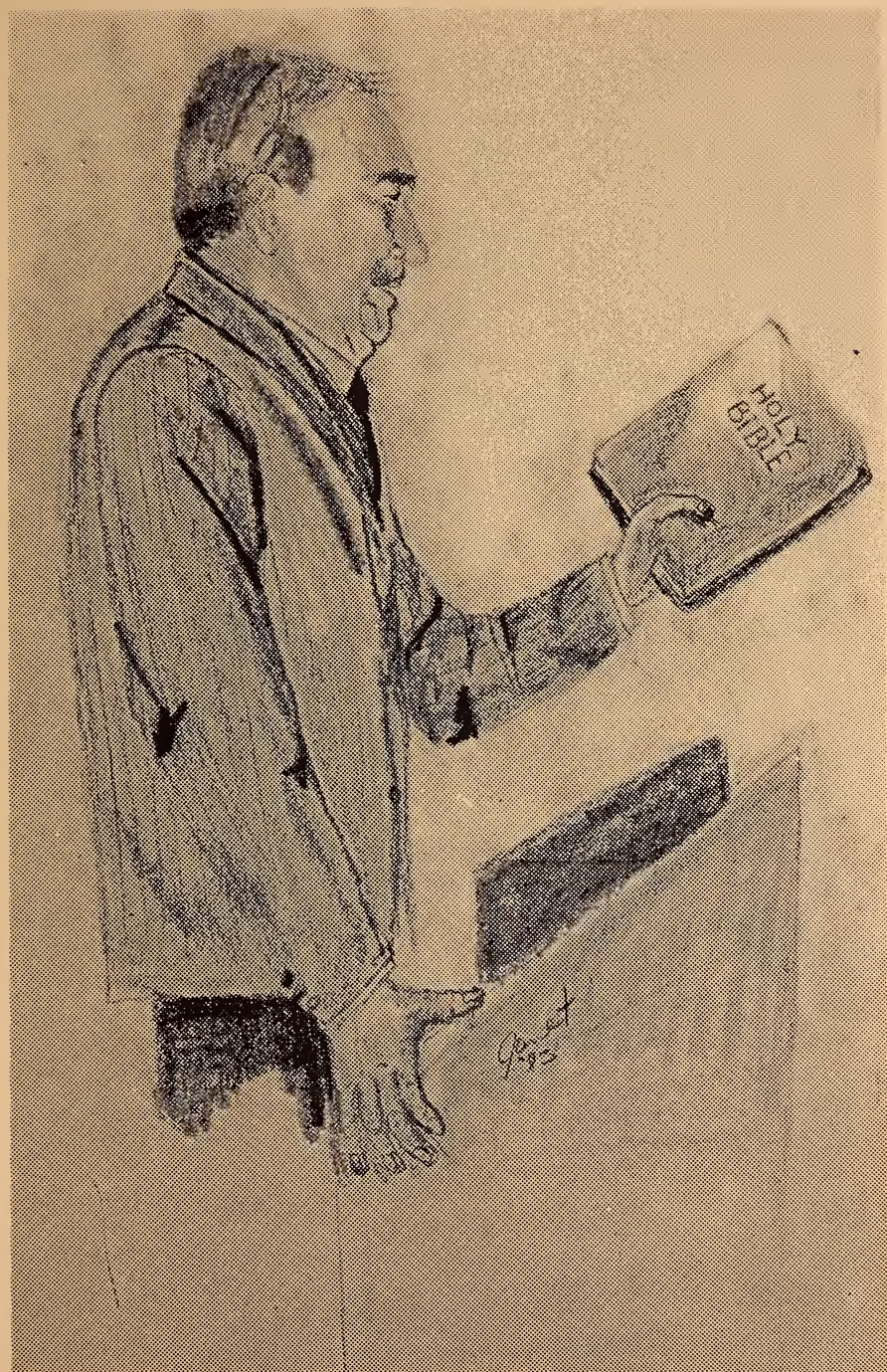
full chorus of "Amens" rings out. The man in back of me jars my ears with an explosion of "AMEN!" I jump and drop my hand fan on the unswept, raw-plank floor. Jesus lands face down and the little sweet-smelling boy rushes with great commotion to pick it up. He carefully brushes all the dust off the Jesus side and then hands it back to me. His stern, grey eyes scold me.

Brother Roy Hedgepeth steps up to the pulpit to lead the singing. Uncle Oscar Jolly says he and Brother Roy do not see eye to eye on much of anything, and I know at once personal appearance is one of those things. Brother Roy is a very thin man; hatchet face, Uncle Oscar Jolly calls him. He's wearing a bright yellow suit, a tie with a Hawaiian scene on it and white patent leather shoes. His navy black hair is beginning to pop loose from the tight hold it has on his head and his thick glasses slip down on his nose, causing him to push them up with every movement he makes. His spidery fingers signal hymn number two and Aunt Gladys, Uncle Oscar Jolly's wife, slips onto the piano bench and gives an introduction to "Onward Christian Soldiers," on the upright, out-of-tune piano. Aunt Gladys says she doesn't like to play the piano in church anymore because she can't hear well enough; she never knows if she is playing too loud or too soft. Aunt Gladys can't read a note of music, she plays by ear, so it takes the first stanza for Brother Roy and the congregation to catch up with the tempo and key she is using. But when they finally catch up they are able to drown out most of her bad notes.

Brother Roy has a wonderful bass voice and I really believe that Uncle Oscar Jolly is envious of Brother Roy's singing because I have heard him say many times he'd wish all his wishes for a strong bass voice. Uncle Oscar Jolly can't sing at all. The hymn ends with Aunt Gladys in the wrong key and Brother Roy finishing late. In her robin's-egg blue dress and matching shoes, Aunt Gladys takes her seat on the pew near the piano. She glances back at me and waves her white embroidered handkerchief. Her grey hair, now almost white, and inherited green eyes remind me so much of her six younger sisters.

Uncle Oscar Jolly wastes no time in taking the floor. He is intimidating in his black suit, black shoes, black tie and solid gold watch chain. His bald head glistens with perspiration. He is still a large man, quite round with a barrel chest; his skin is drawn tight on his face, very few wrinkles for a man of eighty. He slowly inspects the congregation for missing members; his face expressionless.

Without warning he pounds the lectern with his fist and jolts the small church with his trumpetlike voice, proclaiming the devil as a real monster, a violent creature that can destroy our souls and lead us to a life of wickedness, hopelessness and eventually to a fiery prison with misery like we've never known: Hell. Hell is Uncle Oscar Jolly's favorite sermon topic. He shouts and struts in grand form. Finally he



Janet Campbell

draws a quick breath and turns to see what registers on the thermometer. When he notices how fast the temperature is rising, he quickens his pace like a race horse on the final lap. Everyone is shouting and working into a frenzy. I feel sweat from the little boy's brown arms pressed next to mine, and I fan the air faster. Uncle Oscar Jolly bolts toward the people with his black leather, gold leafed, monogrammed Bible raised high over his head. Aunt Gladys looks back at me, her fan vibrating like bumble bee wings. She once told me that sometimes she just has to end things herself, and I can tell she is thinking of doing just that. Uncle Oscar Jolly lays hands on an elderly man. He demands the man's crippled leg be healed. The old man says it feels a smart better and hugs Uncle Oscar Jolly for trying. Uncle Oscar Jolly tells him that they'll work on it some more at Prayer Meeting Wednesday night.

Uncle Oscar Jolly is hot, his sermon about hell is hot, and the thermometer is at 99 degrees. The little boy's sweet lilac is beginning to go flat and mix with the other dime store fragrances. It is time for the footwashing. Footwashing usually comes just after the sermon and before the offering, but Aunt Gladys decides to stop the service; several of the women are pale and faint. She goes to the piano and begins to play loudly. Uncle Oscar Jolly has to yell loud to be heard over the piano, but he continues until he can find a good place to stop. He doesn't even ask if there are any lost souls that want to be saved. Just a quick prayer that blesses everyone and their livestock. Brother Roy, whose yellow linen suit is now wrinkled and wet with sweat, leads the singing of "Shall We Gather at the River." That's a wonderful thought for I am stuck to the seat; sweat runs down my forehead and into my eyes. I am glad to sing the last words and get out.

Everyone retires to the large shade trees in the front yard. Soon bright patchwork quilts cover the ground for the little ones; folding chairs and ice chests emerge. Boys and fathers begin horse shoes and dart games while mothers and grandmothers hand out lemonade and sugar cookies. The dinner-on-the-ground is almost ready.

A familiar sweet smell comes close to me. I turn and the lean boy with slicked down hair is staring at me. I ask him his name. "Peter," he says. We both get another glass of lemonade and two cookies each and begin to wander away from the gaiety in the church yard. Peter eats and talks at the same time. "I got a shotgun for Christmas last year and I gotta' dog named Sam. He's a good huntin' dog. My dog's five years old and I'm twelve. My mama's name is Ida Camp, she baked these cookies and I hate when the sermon is cut short. I like the footwashin', it cools you down. But I like the baptizin' most. They have the baptizin' down at Mr. Rainey's pond. Mr. Rainey built that pond just for baptizin' and cat fishin'. Want to see it?" Peter leads me down a narrow, well-worn cow path and tells me all about the last

baptizing which was held during a thunderstorm and about his daddy, who hates church, killing a twelve-point buck right at the edge of the pond and how he wants to drive a Lincoln Continental, own seven black suits and have a black leather, gold leafed, monogrammed Bible.

When we get to the pond dam, Peter steps close to the murky water. Several cows join us and Peter sticks out his chest, raises his arms and begins to shout about Hell and sin. The cows are confused. A school of minnows swims close to the edge of the pond dam, but darts away when Peter screams, "REPENT, REPENT." The church bell clangs and mothers yell, "Come and get it." Peter takes my hand, and we run back up the cow path with Peter shouting in a shrill voice, "God bless trees, rain, sun and flowers. God bless cows, cripples and lost souls. God bless Mr. Rainey's pond and dinner-on-the-ground. And God bless the preacher. Amen. Do I hear Amen?"

Sandra Cooper
First Place, Short Story
MICROCOSM AWARD
First Place, MJCCWA Competition ;
Scholarship Award,
Mississippi College Literary Competition

Comparison of Bartleby and Christ

Because of the apparent failure of Melville's novel **Moby Dick**, many people consider "Bartleby the Scrivener" an expression of his feelings of loneliness and isolation. By looking at the story we can see the correlation of the situations and circumstances of Bartleby to Christ and Christ to our everyday life.

Like Christ, Bartleby has a limited amount of information written about his earlier years. The writers of the New Testament and the narrator of Bartleby record little beginning information about Christ or about Bartleby. In "Bartleby" the narrator says "Bartleby was one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable, except from the original sources, and in his case those are very small." Like Bartleby, we know little about the life of Christ except for his birth and the three years of his ministry which were to fulfill all of the prophecies of the scriptures.

The parallel in their lives continues when we see how people react to them. Much misunderstanding arose during the life of Christ about his mission and much misunderstanding now surrounds Bartleby. Christ was misunderstood by the Jews, the high priests, earthly rulers, his family, his friends, and even those whom he chose to be his disciples. Their attitudes and image of what the Son of God was going to do seems to have blinded them to the truth and the reality of Christ being the Son of God. Bartleby, like Christ, finds himself being misunderstood by those with whom he worked. Because the workers in the office are not able to handle someone different and set apart, their temper begins to fly as we see Turkey become enraged because he doesn't understand Bartleby. Turkey says "I'll just step behind his screen, and black his eyes for him." Even today we become enraged if we don't understand a person's actions and attitudes, and if we can't, we put him behind a screen out of the way. We, like Turkey, tend to get mad at people we don't understand.

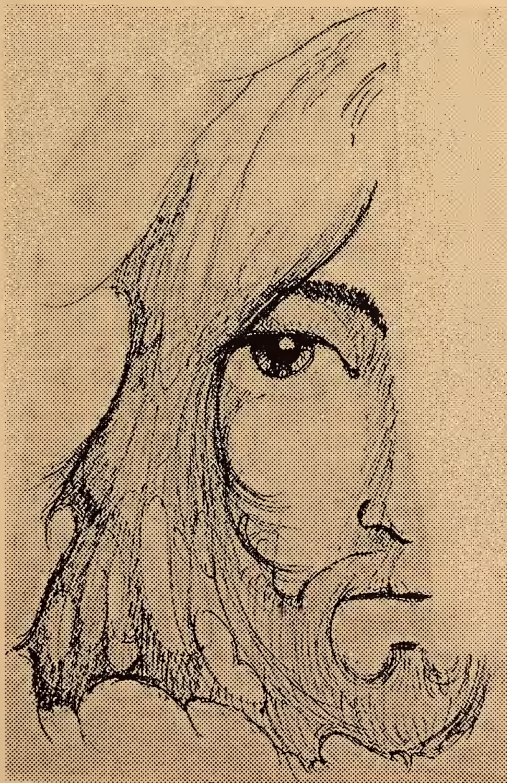
Because of these misunderstandings, Bartleby and Christ experience rejection. When at last the narrator finds himself unable to cope with Bartleby's situation, he decides to leave the building and move his office to another building. He leaves Bartleby behind in hopes that Bartleby would become the responsibility of someone else. But the narrator soon finds out that his rejection of Bartleby is not something he can totally forget. Many times the narrator tries to avoid the truth of his knowing Bartleby, "In vain I persisted that Bartleby was nothing to me — no more than to any one else." Like Bartleby, Christ was rejected by those who worked closely with him. Christ was rejected when the people chose the murderer Barabbas to live instead of saving the life of one who had done nothing wrong. He was rejected

and denied three times by Peter, a disciple who said he didn't know Christ. And Christ must have felt rejected even by his own heavenly Father because on the cross He cried out ". . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). This rejection by those surrounding Christ and Bartleby soon brings about a permanent change.

As we follow the final stage of Bartleby, we see how he and Christ find their total freedom in death. The narrator's description of the prison, or the Tombs, gives the feeling that Bartleby is caught between this world and his freedom; "The yard was entirely quiet. It was not accessible to the common prisoners. The surrounding walls of amazing thickness kept off all sounds behind them."

Melville uses the narrator once again to connect Bartleby with Christ. When the narrator says ". . . he now sleeps with kings and counselors," we remember echoes of the Old Testament. Job cries out ". . . I had been at rest with kings and counselors . . ." (Job 3:14). Bartleby has found his freedom through death. Like Bartleby, Christ was also placed in the tomb dead. But here the parallel ends, for on the third day Christ returned totally free; even death could not hold him in the grave.

Gary White



Norman Cupit

The Decline Of The United States

Over two centuries ago our forefathers came to this land seeking political and religious freedom that they were being denied in their respective homelands. We in the United States have come from a small handful of rebels to become the most powerful nation in the world today. Is this country in its downfall? If it is, can we turn these events around?

This country was founded by people strong in their belief in God. Christopher Columbus stated: "From my youth onward, I was a seaman and have continued until this day . . . Wherever on the earth a ship has been I have been . . . The Lord was well disposed to my desire, and he bestowed me courage and understanding; knowledge of seafaring . . . Our Lord unlocked my mind, sent me upon the sea, and gave me fire for the deed. Those who heard of my enterprise called it foolish, mocked me and laughed. But who can doubt but the Holy Ghost inspired me?"

Is this great land of ours truly picked by God to be what we are? Prior to World War II the American people had acquired more than one-third of the cultivated resources and wealth of the world. All these possessions had been accrued quite rapidly since 1800. Never before in the history of the world had anything like this occurred. Never did any people or nation spread out so suddenly and rapidly into such magnitude of national power. Abraham Lincoln in a "Proclamation by the President" on March 30, 1863, said: "It is the duty of nations as well as men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord." As we look at history, we can see that in acquiring our wealth America has not really toiled for the riches she has gained. In comparison to other peoples we as a people have generally had things handed to us. Throughout history we have seen our people struggling among themselves and against foreign intervention. But we have been blessed by the simple fact that in most times of national emergency Americans have stuck together, unlike some countries.

God has blessed the American people with prosperity as long as we have humbled ourselves to him. On the 5th of January 1921 the steel magnate Charles M. Schwab said: "Our United States has been endowed by God with everything to make it and keep it the foremost industrial and commercial nation of the world." The leaders of our social and political arenas have stood up and told the people where

they thought our abundant human and natural resources came from. The people, of course, came from the nations where they were facing suppression of their religious and human rights and freedoms. What better place to start again but in the land where there was freedom like no other place on this earth? Could all this have happened by coincidence? Do we hear leaders today telling people to thank God for his abundant blessings that we enjoy every day? Of course not! I don't imagine that this would be considered safe politics today. How often does even the preacher stand in the pulpit and ask for the people to pray for the leaders of this country?

Are we, the great spiritual nation we once were, pushing God out of our lives? Government corruption, sexual freedom, high crime rates, drug abuse: sounds quite like the six o'clock news, doesn't it. Crime in America has increased to the point that in some areas the law will not go into some neighborhoods. Pornography was practically unheard of twenty-five years ago, but now you can't go to the corner drug store and not see the "Adult Book Section." The problems today are not unlike the problems that have shown up all through history. Our problems can be solved in an age-old way. All we have to do is to be like our forefathers. We must humble ourselves before God and ask him to help us in our time of need. Now is America's time of need.

Is America the military nation that it once was? Or are we just the Paper Tiger? The Korean War ended in a draw. In Vietnam we met defeat "With Honor." The tiny backward country of Iran held this once huge nation captive. Is this the way a great world power conducts its business? Maybe we just don't have the backbone and pride that our founding fathers had. Maybe we have lost the beliefs this country was founded on? Do we have the faith in our God that is needed to be the greatest nation on earth? Without faith in God and ourselves, this country is on a quick trip right down the proverbial drain. The only way to turn this country around is to look back to our past and see what the founding fathers did. We must see what made us great. Then we must work to recapture the spirit of America.

The table is before us, our place has been set; now we must choose. Will we become a nation doomed to failure and eventual collapse, or will we choose to be strong once again and take our rightful place at the head of the table of the world. The decision is ours; now is the time to choose; I hope that we choose the right.

John McDonald
Second Place, Formal Essay
MICROCOSM AWARD

Carolyn Hutchinson





Mary Ann Rutland

Feline

Like a cat you purr your feline charm,
begging to be petted, to be held,
soothed into a deep relaxing sleep,
to forget the world of trash cans and fish-heads
awaiting outside. When the cold winds fluff
your fur you are in my lap, adoring the stroke
of my hand, and yet my hand is not enough
to comfort your discontent with me.

At night you quietly go through the screen door
to be free, then to scratch and beg
when you wish to come back in. I buy your food,
clean your room and ask nothing of you
except that you spend some time with me,
you are dreaming of mackeral, rats and fence-top fights.

Sharpening your claws on the scratching post
I see, probably for me one night
when I'm fast asleep, you'll rip out
my eyes, leave me to die, blind.

Leave, out the door, be free
to show your felininity to the wild cats
on the streets who carry the disease,
who want to share the prowling at night
so they won't be alone and frightened.

Glen Hearn
Second Place, Poetry
MICROCOSM AWARD
Scholarship Award,
Mississippi College
Literary Competition

Contrasting Views Of Creon and Antigone

Each person has different views on certain matters because of the unique individuality God bestows on each of his created beings. This is evident in the contrasting views of Sophocles' Creon and Antigone concerning the role of the individual within the state; these views are still present today.

Antigone's view differs from Creon's in that she believes in putting her family before the state. She has grown up under harsh situations which tie her and her family close together. They learn to appreciate their family members and are very loyally bonded. When Antigone confronts the question of choosing between her brother or state, she unhesitatingly chooses to bury her brother, regardless of the deadly circumstances. Thus, her loyalty to her family costs her her life.

Creon's view is just the opposite of Antigone's. He believes in people putting their country before everything else. Because he so greatly wants his people's loyalty, he only listens to his own narrow-minded ideas of keeping his people in line. Thinking he has already made the right decision, he is deaf even to the advice of his own son who pleads for Antigone's life, saying it is better to let her live. Haemon informs Creon that the citizens of Thebes believe so cruel a death for such a generous act is unreasonable. He asks Creon to reconsider.

Haemon advises, "Let men be wise by instinct if they can, but when this fails be wise by good advice."

Angrily Creon replies, "You mean that men of my years have to learn to think by taking notes from men of his? The state is his who rules it." Refusing to reconsider Creon carries out his plans.

Today the contrast of views of an individual's role in the state is still present; a good example is the case of Bobby Sands and Margaret Thatcher. Bobby Sands loses his life for his belief: that Great Britain wrongly treats Northern Ireland and that Northern Ireland should be given its independence. After Sands leads several attacks on Great Britain, the British officials arrest and place him in jail. In order to attest this injustice of his fellow Irish brothers, he goes on a hunger strike to gain recognition so that Prime Minister Thatcher will acknowledge their cause. Thatcher, who holds firm to her beliefs that Northern Ireland poses a danger to the country of England, refuses to adhere to Sands' ideas and denies him appearance before her to plead his cause.

Another conflict between one's beliefs and state occurs in communist Poland between Lech Walesa and Poland's Prime Minister General Jaruzelski. Because of the harsh working conditions of the Polish people, Walesa bands the people together to form Solidarity

Trade Unions to oppose this injustice. Because of industrial sabotage and intermittent strikes in protest, the government arrests Walesa in hope of putting down this rebellion. Although the Polish government applies strict action, Walesa is successful in gaining recognition, in helping reduce the six-day work week to five days, in gaining consideration for free elections to the parliament and local legislative bodies. Even though Walesa does not meet the deadly consequences as Antigone, he does suffer imprisonment for standing up for what he thinks is right. Since Solidarity Unions can lead to more rebellion, Jaruzelski, to preserve control of Poland, smothers the spark before it ignites into a flame. Creon and Jaruzelski believe the state's survival is dependent on the people's dedication to the state.

Like Antigone, Bobby Sands and Lech Walesa stand up for what they believe; like Creon, Margaret Thatcher and General Jaruzelski rule for the good of their country. Past controversies over an individual's loyalty to his state or to his personal convictions are still present today.

Kathy Haralson
First Place, Formal Essay
MICROCOSM AWARD;
Honorable Mention,
MJCCWA Competition

The Space Shuttle: The Nine Billion Dollar Dream Machine

I'm sitting in my favorite rocking chair, by my favorite window, doing my most favorite thing of all, remembering. But considering my age — 124 years — I guess I'm lucky I can still do that. Yes, living on the moon does have its advantages. Its main one being that it's low gravity is a lot easier on an ole man's ticker and bones. And if you don't believe me, you can ask my old lady, and I do mean old; she's a year older than me. She's in the kitchen now trying to see just how awful she can make the evening meal taste. It's not that she's a bad cook, at least I don't think so; it's been so darned long I can't really remember. It's just that even after living here for over 70 years she still hasn't forgiven me for making her leave her family.

I still don't believe I really made her leave. I gave her two options: either come with the kids and me like any decent wife would or stay there by herself and rot. Well, maybe I did lay it on rather thick. But desperate times call for desperate measures. Anyway, it worked, and regardless of her food-pallet torture, I'd still do it all over. Yes, all over. From my first trip out to, wait a minute old man, here comes what you've been waiting for, an RC 747, one of Moon City's newest cargo and passenger ships.

If I've neglected to inform you why I park my ole carcass in this chair by this window, it's because it looks out over Moon City's main launch and reception station, referred to as Heaven's Gate. But anyway, back to the RC 747. And, boy howdie, what a looker. It looks so delicate and graceful and yet such sharp lines and powerful. Like a ballet dancer who could whip the whole moonball team. Something truly to behold. Yep, they've sure come a long way from the first spacefaring vessels. What were they called? Space scuttles? Nah. Space shuttles. Yeah, that's it.

Let me see, I've got an old report I did in college on the blasted things. I transferred it to microfilm and stacked it around here some place. I could ask Donna I guess; nah, the only thing worse than her cooking is her tongue-lashing. Laser surgeons could watch her tongue operate and learn from it. Ah-ha, here's the film, at least I think it is. Let's see what the inscription on the capsule says, **English 3rd period, I search, "The Space Shuttle," 1982**. Boy, what a museum piece this is gonna be. All right, let's insert in projector here, press switch there, viola, watch history unfold.

1. What is the space shuttle?
2. How is space shuttle built?
3. What purpose will space shuttle serve man now?

4. Future plans.

5. Why is this something I need to know?

I've decided to write on the space shuttle. I'm not really sure why I've hit upon this topic, but it sings to me so like the book says, maybe writing about it will bring something out. The search begins. I enter the campus library and like every other library I've been in, I'm filled with a kind of wonderment (definition of wonderment - awful lot of awe and respect). I imagine all the hours of sweat it took to make a half-ounce idea into a pound of reading. Then the library staff has to catalog, file, cross-file, and a multitude of other chores before the book even hits the shelf. It's like the big oak tree behind my house. So many people look at it and just see the tree and don't even think about the intricate and very crucial root system below. Or the struggle the tiny acorn fought and won just to survive. But the crusade will have to wait another day; today it's just me and the space shuttle.

What exactly is the space shuttle? Well, I can't really use all the big words the magazines use to describe it, but when you figure its cost (9 billion dollars), I guess the bigger the better. Anyway, it's a very special space-faring cargo ship to be used over and over. It consists of three main components: the orbiter, external tank, and solid rocket boosters. It takes such a huge amount of power and fuel to get the shuttle into orbit that they just bolt the shuttle together with the solid rocket boosters and huge fuel tanks and let it go. When it takes off it looks like a mini-747 stuck on the side of the Taj Mahal hell bent for the heavens. The boosters are discarded after only two minutes and retrieved out of the Gulf. The fuel tank gets a free ride just until the shuttle almost reaches its orbit, (about eight minutes), then it too is plunged back to earth and picked up out of the Indian Ocean.

The feature I think is the sharpest is the on-board computer system. From nine minutes before lift-off and until just about set-down time, almost the whole show is run by these mechanical geniuses. They can handle 325,000 operations a second. Also, instead of the hundreds of controllers that were required on Apollo missions to keep up with incoming data, with the use of this new breed of computers only four controllers are used to perform the same tasks.

The system they use in operation is called a "quad-redundant." There are four working computers with one back-up. All of the four computers receive and process the same information and if one disagrees with the other three, majority wins but the loser is shut down. If one of the remaining three happens to change his mind and disagrees with the remaining two, majority wins again. Then if the remaining two computers have a dispute, the back-up computer is called in and his word is law. Whatever the back-up says is final.

You may ask what purpose the shuttle program will serve. And all I've got to say to that is the sky's the limit. The immediate plans for the

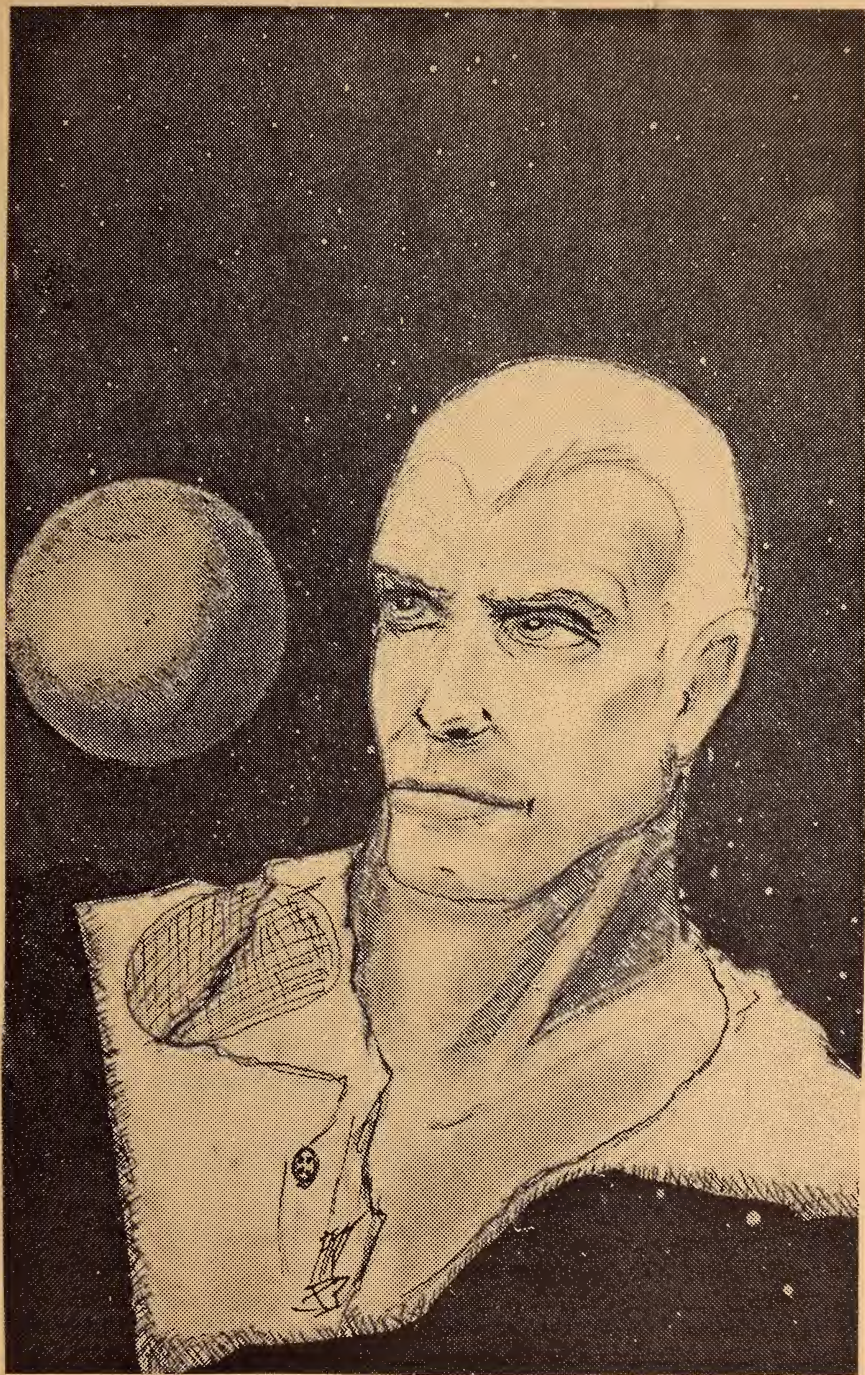
shuttle are to deploy and service telephone and television switching stations. This very morning, November 11, 1982, at about 6:15 a.m. the Space Shuttle Columbia belched out a cloud of smoke and fire and lifted off with its cargo bay filled for the first time with two communication satellites. (The future is now. Wake up, take notice, or you'll be living in the past.) Also the Air Force has reserved thirteen of its first forty-four flights to put up big-eyes-in-the-sky satellites. They also plan to test new military killer satellites that use high energy laser beams to knock down enemy satellites.

Further down the road but more on the brighter side are the future plans for the shuttle. Industry is beginning to mobilize its forces and resources preparing itself for the day when it, too, will venture out into space to build space factories. These industries are planning to cash in on the ultra-low gravity of space to make purer crystals for micro-electronics, clearer glass for fiber optics, and stronger alloys from metals that refuse to mix here on Earth. Future plans for the shuttle are as bright and plentiful as the stars you can count on a clear summer night. And the brightest is the prospect of the shuttle being the first major step toward colonies in space.

Without any doubt I'd say the space shuttle is well worth the nine billion dollar investment. Not only will it pay off with new technology, newer and better materials, and a more comprehensive understanding of the earth sciences, but more importantly are the hope, dreams, the sparkle that take shape in someone's eyes when he talks of the possibilities. We live, love, laugh, cry, and try to raise families on a world knowing that at any minute some silly or stupid conflict could end up with the total destruction of everything we hold dear. I look at my children and then at the space shuttle. I have great hopes and high expectations for both.

* * *

Whew! I'd almost forgotten just how depressing and gloomy things were then. Needless to say, the space shuttle did get things started, but who would have believed seventy years ago that the emergence of a new political party could've had such a global effect. Only in America. A symphony director, tired of the way things were going, formed a new party — Harmony's Way, and ran on the platform that the present parties, who were all mainly lawyers, knew how to pass new laws for their own benefit, knew how to bend existing laws, but said they knew nothing about directing the government. And also swore, if elected, to put a \$10 bounty on every lawyer scalp and his shingle. I'm not going to say which statement got the man elected; both were very popular, but thank God he was. He got the government, industries, and people all in tune. Then he directed their attention toward the stars and put it to music. It was a song of joy, adventure, of new beginnings. The rest of the world seeing this change come about



Art McAlpin

and not wanting to miss the boat opted for a world government. Yep, Harmony's Way won out.

Now we have colonies not only on the moon, but also on Mars, two of Jupiter's moons, Io and Ganymede, and mining operations around the Saturn rings. Ah yes, things are really looking good. Uh-oh, here comes Donna with the evening gruel. I think I'll take a sample down to the lab for analysis. Who knows, maybe it'll make a new rocket fuel.

Charles Cunningham
First Place, Informal Essay
MICROCOSM AWARD;
Honorable Mention,
MJCCWA Competition

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Southerners

Southerners are different I must admit,
For who else could have a conniption fit?
Southerners are smarter than credited for;
No one else does it like they can, for shore.

They have a new breed of canines; it's called
By what other name than dawg, here, dawg. .
When faced with a problem, to solve it they cain't;
Maybe they could but they just ain't.

And they don't acknowledge the Lord, thy God,
For they pay homage to Gawd, oh Gawd.
(If disaster should strike, it's Lawd, oh Lawd.)
And life for them is hawd, so hawd.

Their r's go unnoticed unless they're obtuse.
Just discard thuh ah (r) and you won't be confused.
The expressions they use, my, what a wonder!
Who could find out where is over yonder?

Ah, worldly you are, wordly you're not.
Down there you don't have; in the South, you got!
Yes, the tongue of the South is foreign to most,
Unadvantageous and quite verbose.

So, if in your travels you land in the South,
Please drawl out the words; let them fall from your mouth.

Annette Savarese
First Place, Poetry
MICROCOSM AWARD;
Honorable Mention, MJCCWA;
Honorable Mention, Mississippi
College Literary Competition

"E is for _____!"

There are only twenty-six letters in the English alphabet. These letters begin at a and end with z. Although they are few in number, they can compose thousands of words. One of these letters is e. E is for everything!

E is for the enthusiastic way students enter their English class. Once inside the classroom they are expected to sit endlessly and listen to an excellent instructor try to effortlessly explain alliteration to the exhausted group who has simply had enough. In her effectively educated tone of voice, she begins, "The speaker was an excitingly entertaining, excellent performer!" As the instructor ends, the students run enthusiastically out the door.

E is for the erratic way students enter the cafeteria. Once inside, Eddie energetically exclaims that the milk is evaporated, the eggs are powdered, and the lunch has evidently been re-heated. The students have had enough! With evil in their eyes, they start an extra-ordinary food fight that exhausts the infamous food supply. The students then excuse themselves from the extravagant escapade.

E is for the ecstatic students who enter the rec hall and eventually evacuate their income in games such as Escapade. Especially eerie Evelyn, whose elbows are elevated eleven inches below their expected position. She's an empty-headed egotist who never spends a dime — especially on an electronic encounter. She was elected class treasurer, not for her effeminate charm, but for her economizing disposition. However, the students are simply elated when Edgar, the walking encyclopedia, escorts Evelyn out the exit door and engages upon her the technical aspects of all eighteen games.

E is also for the endless line of students who are expelled from school that evening for their erratic behavior. Evelyn and Edgar, among others, feel that the faculty has excused them for no evident reason, and that the whole escapade is simply an example of tyrannous faculty control.

E is for everything you can think of! Evidently everyone has an exaggerated example of an experience that once happened to an erratic group of energetic friends.

Lori Craft

The Dissection Of A Music Lover's Head

We at the city morgue were given an unusual opportunity this morning to get inside the head of a teenager. The death of this music lover was most timely for in two weeks he would have celebrated his twentieth birthday and priceless information on the operation of the teen-age mind would have been lost.

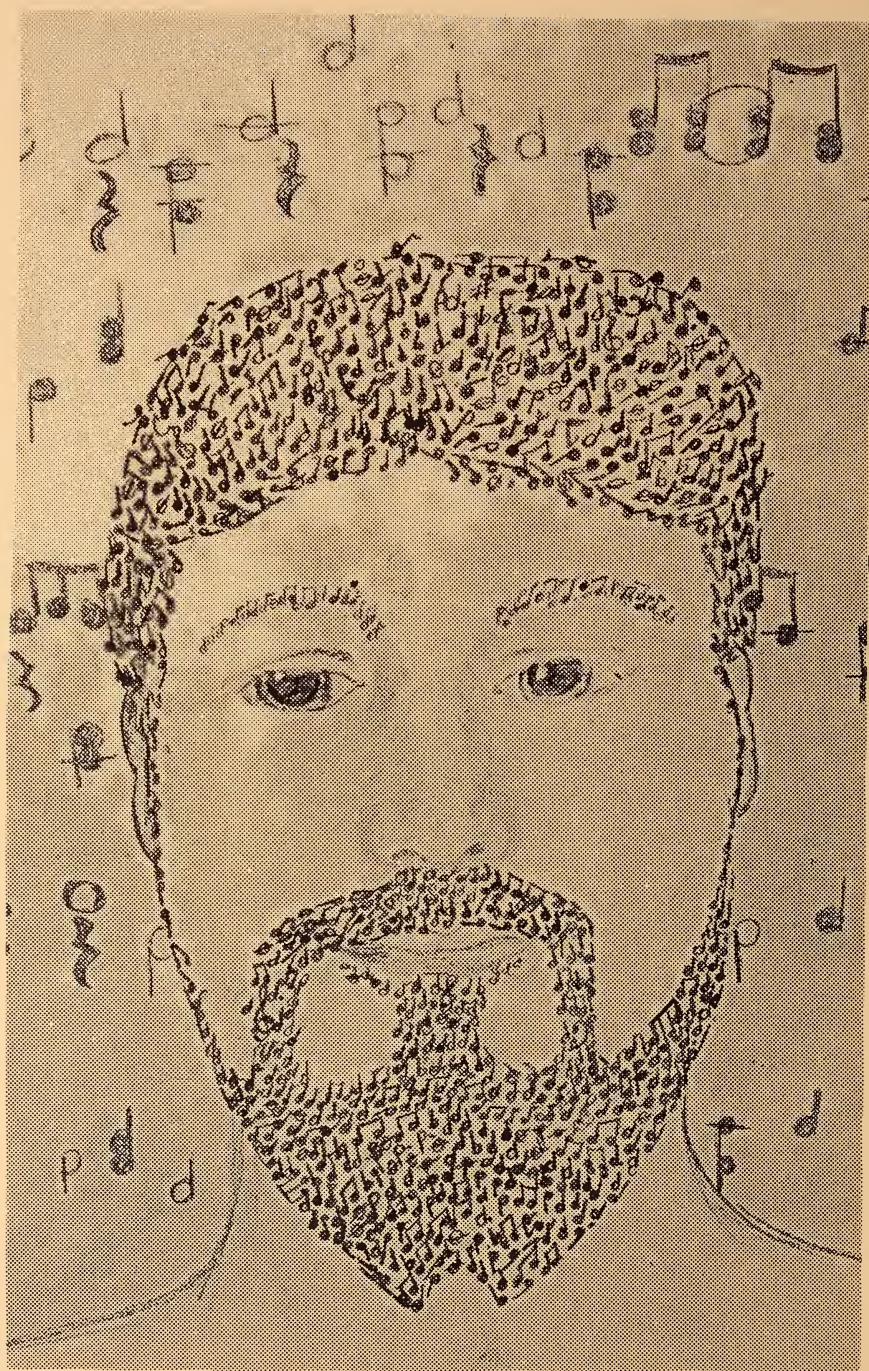
We regret not being able to report on the discoverles in the heart and body, but the unfortunate lad was crossing the eight-tracks north of town when he was struck by a freight train immediately severing the head which rocked and rolled clear of the oncoming cars that crushed and mangled the body rendering it useless for scientific exploration.

First, we examined an ear-cushioning device which clung tenaciously to his head and from which extended skyward an aluminum reed enabling the music lover to receive signals inaudible to the human ear. Initially, we hypothesized that the cushions protected the music lover's most valuable asset, the ear drums, but upon close observation concluded the device was ineffective because of the numerous cracks and piercing of the left eardrum and a completely shattered right ear drum. Curiously, the ear canal and ear drums vibrated profusely throughout the examination, though all known signs of life had left the individual twelve hours earlier.

Keep in mind that our findings are completely objective as we could examine this misguided teen without the intrusion of emotion that could have thwarted our observations had it involved someone about whom we cared.

The music lover's eyeballs protruded extensively as if they had been gradually blasted from their sockets by an interior force and were glazed by a protective coating of cellophane. Though we have not determined the reason, the hair contained an unprecedented volume of static and though from the front the teen appeared to be a Blondie, on the flip side the hair was the shade of Black Sabbath.

Although the head had rolled down a grassy embankment, we found a wide assortment of rock in the youth's head. Also, we were startled to find a brain so apparently organized that it rivaled comparable cerebrums found in much older specimens classified as geniuses. The left sphere contained one million certified microdiscs which were protected by imaginative brightly-colored cardboard-like jackets. The microdiscs were categorized in what seemed to be an illogical alphabetical order ranging from Alabama, America, and Asia, (which we found to contain, incidentally, no data on the regions from which they derived their names), to Led Zeppelin, under which we found no information on the dirigible airship. We speculate the



Trisha Peters

teenager in question was a member of a secret order with an advanced coding and filing system.

We examined a sampling of the microdiscs which seemed to perform best at 33 1/3 revolutions per minute, but in times of stress would reach a peak of 45 revolutions per minute, and found immense volumes of illogical, nonsensical and often poetic attempts to glorify love, nature, life or government, with an equal quantity of volumes degrading the same. We concluded the music lover was haunted by unclassical schizophrenia separating his emotions and thought processes into Amplitude Modulation predominantly, but reverting as if by the flip of a switch to Frequency Modulation, better known as AM/FM complex.

We flipped past discs labeled by such abstract categories as Benatar, Stray Cats, John Cougar, Chicago, Neil Diamond, ELO, Go-Gos, but stopped to examine the only disc believed to have been shattered by the impact of the crash, ironically entitled Grateful Dead.

Flipping over to the right sphere we found well-thumbed copies of **Billboard**, a score of videotapes wrapped securely and labeled Solid Gold, (though we could find no trace of the ore), and enough scandalous poster-like impressions to wallpaper an average teenager's room. We found little evidence that the teenager had any conception of mathematics except in relation to an ever-changing axiom known as the Top 40 and a preoccupation with the only constant numeral we found, \$7.98.

Unlike the microdiscs of the left sphere, the right cerebrum sphere contained miles of a thin metallic tape substance, that could be rewound for repetition or fast-forwarded for omission. However, the system was imperfect for we found masses of the tape had spilled over into the sinus cavity causing extreme pressure and creating an antisocial behavior in the subject.

Moving into the throat area we found severely strained and excessively damp and soapy vocal chords, a result of attempting to sing in the shower. The youth's tongue was split into quadrophonic regions of which we determined the left rear and right front sections to be woofers emitting low frequency sounds, and the left front and right rear sections to be tweeters emitting the high frequency sounds. We hypothesize that in order to receive pleasant tones from the teenager, one would have to stand at the intersection of the four quadrants, precisely the center of the subject's tongue.

No other findings of such an unusual nature are worthy of note, except the palate of the mouth had begun to develop what we believe would have been a treble cleft.

Gloria Gill Kellems
First Place, Informal Essay
MICROCOSM AWARD;
Honorable Mention, MJCCWA

Release

A glimpse, deciduous,
Presupposes
The miraculous.

The sheath bursts,
Consent to determined within.
An arduous journey
For warmth, pure and true.
Ends in a final thrust
Completing the difficult goal.

An objective, contestable,
Now becomes
A truth, unquestionable.

Annette Savarese

The Book Of Daniel

Once in every person's life, he is blessed or cursed, depending on his outlook, with a glimpse of truth. A revelation. It can come at the most unexpected times, be triggered by the least expected things. But what is revealed is so real, so clear, you wonder why you never noticed it before and once you see it, you never forget. However, the truth is not always a pretty mistress to look upon. Just ask Daniel, wherever he is.

Daniel is your typical twenty-three year old bachelor, living in one of the more suave "singles only" apartment complexes in the greater metropolitan area. One of the more sought after males who inhabits the complex. Not because he is exceedingly handsome or rich but because he is fun; people become relaxed and just like being around him. His smile is the kind that toothpaste commercials are made of. Daniel is a lover of life who gives as much as he takes, and no party or gathering is considered complete without the presence of Daniel.

That's where he is on this Saturday night. Doing what he does best: mixin', fixin', and relieving friction. Daniel greets them all with his famous smile, a slap on the back or rump, depending on their gender, gives them a quick song and dance, and leaves them laughing. In the twenty minutes he's been there, Daniel realizes he's only made it about half-way across the room; and by deducing this, it doesn't take our young hero long to figure out if this keeps up, it'll be another twenty minutes before he even reaches the bar. Well, fun is fun; but making people laugh is a thirsty business, so he decides to speed up the operation by side-lining the opposition. That is, he bypasses the rest of the crowd by skirting along the wall toward the bar. Finally he reaches his goal; his drink served and gulped down before you can blink an eye. He asks for another. Feeling relieved and refreshed but not yet ready to rejoin the throng of people, Daniel seeks refuge through a dimly lighted hallway. He hears voices and like a moth is to light, Daniel seeks them out. He finds a doorway and peeks around the edge. In it he sees a small room with shelves of books, probably a study, occupied by four elderly gentlemen. By the very nature and tone of their speech, Daniel realizes what a grave mistake he's made. Nobody, especially Daniel, likes being snared and skinned by the intellectuals. He starts to make good his escape when something he hears makes him stop dead in his tracks. The four elders are discussing the changing world. One says, "No wonder morality is rapidly becoming a thing of the past because mankind is quickly becoming dehumanized. He is being turned into a piece of machinery. And a machine has no morals."

After a few minutes Daniel gets to his feet to move again and makes it back out to the party. But the discussion he's overheard bothers him so badly that for the first time in ages Daniel isn't the last one to leave, and when he does decide to leave, he is able to walk out instead of his usual fashion of leaving a party, being carried out. Daniel loves a good party.

Daniel wakes the next day with the midday sun glaring him full in the face. He rises, turns on the tube, and heads for the shower. After his shower and other daily necessities, Daniel catches a look at the television and the overheard conversation from the night before comes rushing back. For on the television, one of the many pre-school educational shows is showing mechanical parts. They're flashing pictures of parts with the definitions underneath. A screw is flashed onto the screen and printed underneath is "a nail-like metal piece with a slot, twisted into or through pieces of solid material to hold them together." A nut follows; it's described as a metal block with a hole through it having a screw thread enabling the block to be screwed onto a bolt or piece machinery. The washer is next: a ring or perforated plate used between a nut and screw to ensure tightness or relieve friction. Then the screwdriver: a tool for turning screws.

Daniel gets up, turns off the set, walks over to the window, and stares off into the distance. There's something running around in his head, but he can't find the handle. What is it, he wonders. Am I trying to make something out of nothing? Well, whatever it is, it's no use trying to chase it; when it's ready, it'll come. He glances at the clock and sees he's almost late for the Sunday card game. It's just a small gathering of Daniel's co-workers from the plant who made it sort of a tradition to meet on Sunday afternoons to play cards. And yes, you guessed it; no gathering is complete without Daniel.

When Daniel arrives, all of the other men are already there. He waltzes in, greets each of the men individually and has a kind word for each. It's amazing what kind of effect Daniel has on them; why just before he entered the room, they were bickering and snarling at one another and now they're all as docile as a bunch of sheep.

The sun has gone down and the game is slowly coming to a close when one of the men starts talking about the new time clock and card system that's been installed at the plant. He remarks on how the keypunched cards don't even have their names on them anymore, just a small number. He says his number is 314-001. Some of the others begin telling their card numbers. The funny thing about this is that all of the men except for Daniel and Mark all have the same last three digits in their numbers, 001. Mark, a newly promoted foreman, says that the last three digits in his number are 100; all eyes turn toward Daniel. He turns on his Hollywood smile and tells the men that the last three digits in his number are 000. This gets a lot of hoots and howls

from his fellow workers. It wasn't that the three digit number was so funny; it's just that nobody including Daniel really knew what Daniel's job really was. Oh, once in a great while he'd have to fill in for a co-worker who was sick or maybe go fetch coffee or needed materials for the foremen but the majority of the time, Daniel did what he wanted to do. He had even wondered himself sometimes how he got by with it, but he would remember the old adage, "Never look a gift horse in the mouth." The discussion and the game both end. The men all exchange farewells and usual "see you tomorrow at work" as they disband and head their separate ways. Daniel still has the disquieting feeling that something from his subconscious is trying to break free and surface. He shakes his head, trying to clear it out; it doesn't help. Daniel shrugs it off and decides to go back to his apartment for a good night's sleep so he'd be prepared for his job — whatever it is — the following morning.

When Daniel arrives at the plant entrance the next morning, he greets the security man, seated in his little booth by the entrance, and inquires into the well being of the officer's wife who has had some kind of operation. The officer acknowledges the greeting, replies that his wife is doing very well, and thanks Daniel for his concern. Daniel strolls up to the new time clock, grabs his card out of the rack, and inserts it into the appropriate slot. After a few seconds, the mechanism within the clock goes clank-click, a bell chimes. Then Daniel withdraws it. He hesitates a moment before he returns it to the rack. He inspects the last three digits of his number one more time. Daniel wonders why his number is different from the others. Mark's number was probably different because he's a plant foreman now, but why is his different; he's no more than anybody else around here. The bubble within his head makes a futile attempt to surface once more. This is beginning to get on Daniel's nerves, but once again he shrugs it off and goes on about his business, whatever it is.

This has been one of Daniel's better days. So far he's managed to stay out of the foremen's sight and has done practically nothing except smoke and chat with other employees. But the inevitable has to happen. Daniel is rounding a corner from nowhere and heading no place in particular, a foreman spots and yells for Daniel to join him. It seems that one of the machines in the plant needs some minor repairs so Daniel is dispatched to retrieve the necessary parts. He reruns the directions the foreman has given him through his mind once more: go up the balcony stairwell, take a left at the top, and all the way back against the wall is a cabinet with the needed parts. Daniel is grateful for the task, not because he is eager to work or please his superiors, but because as long as he's been working here, he'd never been up on the balcony before. The balcony overlooks the entire working area. The plant supervisor has one on the adjacent side of the building; his is even equipped with an elevator. This is a first for Daniel, and he is a little excited.

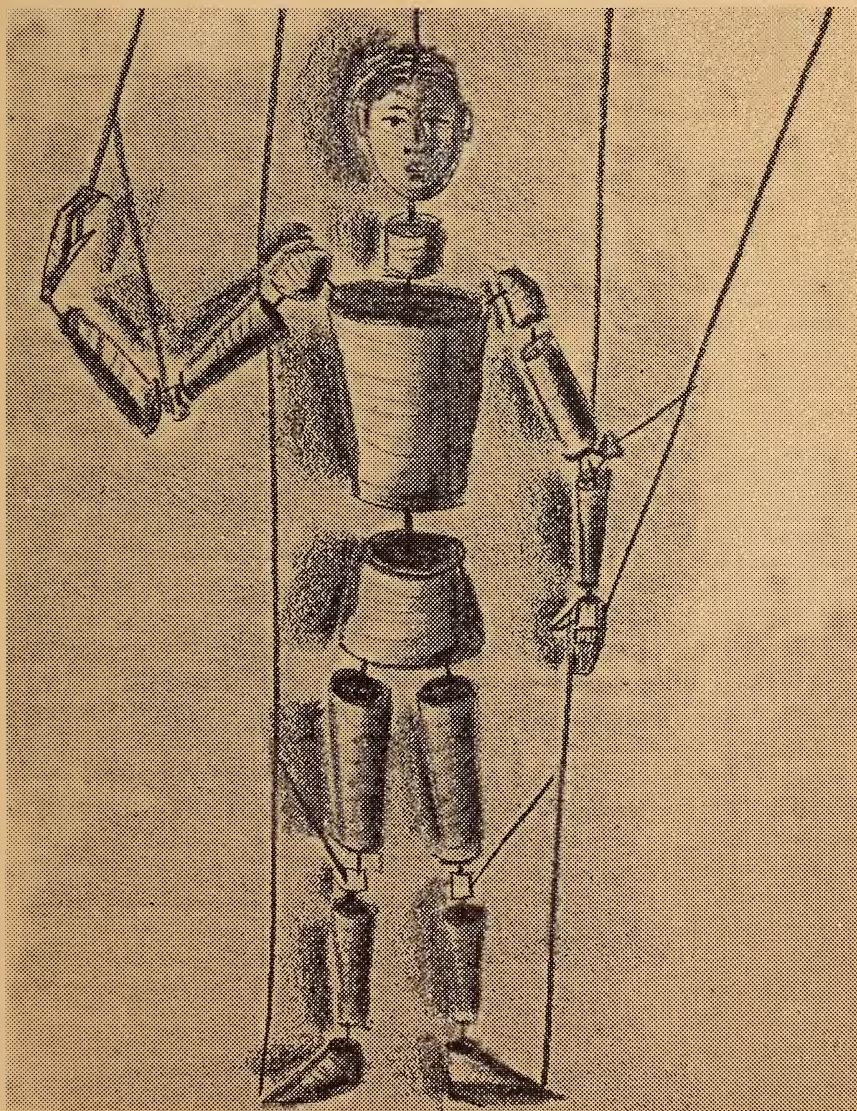
When Daniel reaches the top of the staircase, his first impulse is to turn and look down upon his fellow workers. No, it's too lighted right here and the foreman may be watching. He decides to go ahead and get the parts, look for an unlit area along the balcony's edge, then gawk down onto the floor. Having made up his mind, Daniel turns left then heads back toward the wall. It doesn't take him long to locate the cabinet. The cabinet is a plain metal one, painted a pale green with twelve sliding drawers, but instantly Daniel's eyes stare at the top three drawers. He cautiously opens and closes all three; beads of sweat begin to accumulate on his forehead. The mouth goes dry, the hands go clammy and begin to shake uncontrollably. The bubble surfaces and bursts. Daniel takes the index cards attached to the front of the three drawers and stumbles back to the balcony's edge. Through tear-filled eyes, he stares down at the blank expressionless faces of his fellow workers as they stand by their machines, neither thinking, knowing, or probably caring. All the pieces fall into place: the overheard conversation of the elderly men, the children's show on television, the discussion at the card game about the last three digits on their time cards, and what Daniel's job really is. He looks at the three cards and remembers the contents of the drawers again. One contains nuts, its index card reads 001; the other screws, its card reading 100. The last has washers; the card on it, 000. Remember the definitions? Nut: A metal block with a threaded hole enabling it to be screwed onto a bolt or piece of machinery. It has the same three digits as the majority of the men. Screw: A nail-like metal piece with a head used to hold things together. Everybody said the reason Mark got promoted to foreman was that he had a good head on him. Its index card and his is 100. Washer: A ring used between a nut and screw to ensure tightness or relieve friction. That's what Daniel was, a washer, both being labeled with 000.

Daniel gazes across the complex and his eyes sight in on the supervisor's office. He then realizes who and where the screwdriver is. The young lad rushes down the stairwell and through all the machines and their operators screaming at the top of his lungs, "We're all just part of the machinery!" All the way out into the parking lot until he got in his car and tore off, never to be seen again.

The plant supervisor stands out in front of his office, on his private balcony, gazing down on his domain. He watches the new replacement operate. He is a big raw-boned kid with bulging eyes and ears that stuck straight out from his head. All the surrounding men hold their sides. Probably from laughing so much. Yes, I believe he's going to work out fine. The supervisor looks at his watch and sees it's time to get things started. He gives the universal signal to the head foreman who in turn relays it to the others. The other foremen spread out with their arms over their heads rubbing their middle and forefingers

against the thumb in a clockwise motion yelling, "All right, all you nuts. Get hooked up to your machines and tighten up!"

Charles Cunningham
Second Place, Short Story
MICROCOSM AWARD;
Scholarship Award, Mississippi
College Literary Competition



Janet Campbell

Lonely Cabin

The old man was sitting at the thick pine table, the table he had made for his wife on their tenth anniversary. Scattered on it were a few things: a faded picture of his wife, an empty blue china vase his wife used to keep bright with flowers, and a cracked coffee cup. The smell of coffee was in the air. The light of the one candle was barely enough to read by, but from a small stack of books acquired over the years, the old man picked out a Hawthorne volume and opened it, muttering a little to himself as he flipped through the pages to find his place. The browning pages looked almost as if they had been burned a little around the edges, and the worn leather cover curved like a turtle shell. The candle grew smaller, but he rarely stirred except for moving his hand a little to turn the page or to push back his glasses, black-rimmed with no design but scratches and an occasional tooth mark on the rims from times of concentration. The thick lenses reflected the flame like the bottoms of two whiskey bottles. The skin on his cheeks was rough like old saddle leather, and eyebrows, like two white caterpillars, lay across his eyes, moving a little as his eyes followed the lines. His hair was like a snowy slope that waved and curled above his ears or tumbled into his eyes. With hands the size of canoe paddles he would brush it back, for the old man was truly a big man — his arms so big he seemed to have four legs. They bulged the sleeves of his checked shirt. His overalls were faded almost white from too many washings, and his boots scarred and spotted from years of hard work stretched out before him under the table. The laces in the boots ran in and out of the holes like snakes and were knotted here and there. As the candle flame flickered quite low, the old man leaned back and rubbed his eyes. No more reading tonight; it was too late, he was too tired, and the silence had become too unbearable. With a sigh and a "Good night, Anna" toward the picture, he closed the book and went to bed.

Ken Burnette

Dad,

Those old haunts keep taunting me
as though I were a sponge hanging on the line —
drying, blistering in the hot July sun;
A drained, drip-dry sponge.
First two days, alive and stiff,
one month, handle with care, fragile,
six months, one year, two years
I'm a brick. My skin peels
and the greenest mold decays the last few fibers
of my strength. Let me die.

But those old haunts keep taunting me
as if I were a wall
without legs to kick or arms to kill,
possessing two perfect eyes,
watching a boxing match
with front row seats, no way to retreat,
a farcely one-sided scene.
Come hide behind my wall poor Momma.

Glen Hearn

On Body-Building

I started my search on body-building in the most logical place — the library. I already knew a little about weight lifting, but hardly anything about body-building. And now I realize there is a big difference. Weight-lifting is for toning muscles and building strength; body-building is more involved and produces large, bulging, hard-as-a-rock muscles.

Some people lift weights as a part of their overall physical fitness program. Most athletes involved in school or professional sports lift weights to add strength to their flexibility. A few take weight lifting one step further and go into the more intense weight lifting called body-building.

What exactly is body-building? Body-building is a program of lifting weights to work specific muscles with each exercise and to develop each muscle to its greatest definition. Defining muscles is one of the major goals of a body-builder. That's why a body-builder's muscles are more readily noticeable than just a weight lifter's. An example is Lou Ferrigno, whose muscular bulk is more noticeable than Clint Eastwood's who lifts weights just to keep in shape.

Lifting weights to keep in shape requires about forty-five minutes, three times a week and a regular diet. Your muscles will only get so big, depending on your body chemistry and muscle structure. If this is true, how do body-builders get so big? First, they have a more intense weight training, usually anywhere from one to three hours a day. They also consume great quantities of food and vitamins. A body-builder's diet generally consists of high protein and high carbohydrates. Some body-builders take anabolic steroids to help build up muscle mass.

I found much controversy about steroids. Evidence suggests that taking steroids can cause cancer (along with 20 million other things in this world). Because of the possible danger, very few body-builders take steroids any more. The body-builders who do take the steroids are those who are serious about the body-building competitions. These competitions are held on local, state, and national levels. Two of the most popular competitions are Mr. Universe and Mr. World.

The books I read gave me facts about how to lift weights and the different exercises to do with weights. These facts get very technical, and until I read the books, I didn't realize just how technical. The books discuss reps and sets and unpronounceable names for muscles and muscle groups. The technical side of body-building is not where my interest lies, for I am more interested in the psychological side. What motivates someone to lift weights for hours every day, follow a special diet, and take all of those vitamins? What motivates someone to acquire those bulging muscles? The books could not answer my

questions, so I had to look elsewhere. I needed to talk to a body-builder. But who? Where was I going to find a body-builder to answer my questions?

The answer came one day when I was at work. I work at Kroger, and one night I looked up from the books I was trying to balance and there he was — in checkstand No. 3. He was wearing a T-shirt and jeans that looked as if they were painted on. His muscles rippled every time he lifted groceries from his cart. I couldn't believe my luck, but how was I going to talk to him?

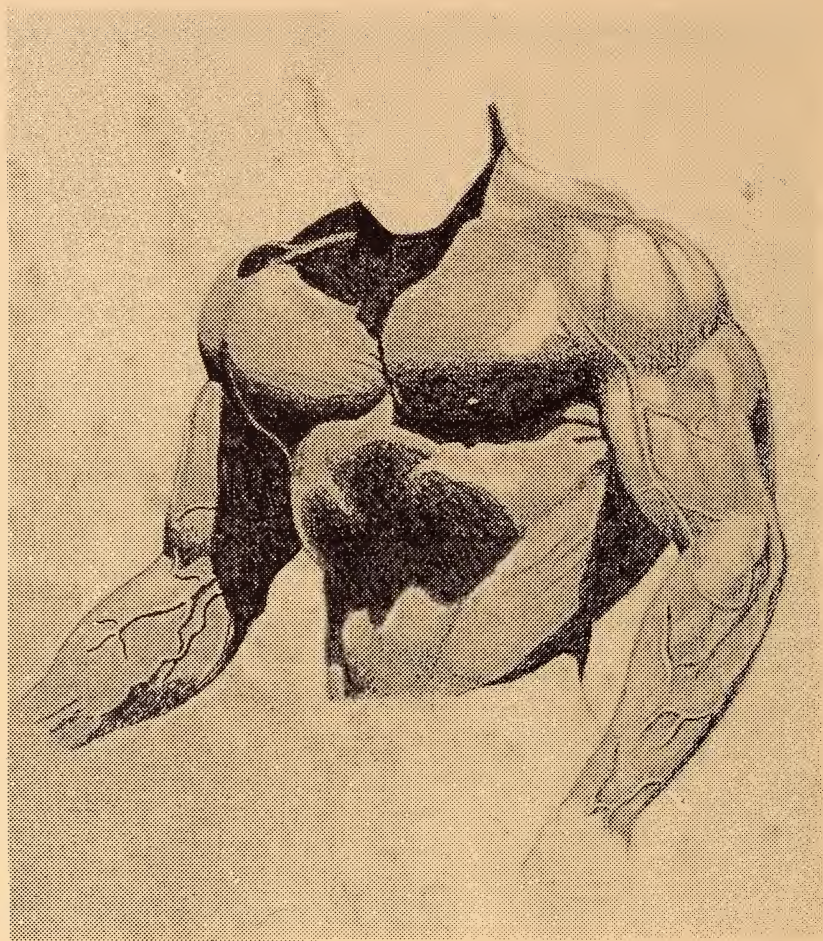
While I was still trying to figure out how to approach him, lady luck smiled on me again. He had to get his check approved and I was the only one who could do that. After I had approved his check, I got up the courage to ask him where he worked out. He said he worked out at the Brookhaven Fitness Center during the week and on Sundays he went to Jackson. I quickly explained about this paper, and before he left we had arranged for me to go to Jackson with him on the following Sunday.

Sunday I met Harry Dodich in town and parked my car. We were going to Mack's gym to talk to Mike Mackenthall, a body-builder, himself.

On the way to Jackson I learned why Harry had begun body-building. Harry had started lifting weights in high school because he was on the football team. By the time he finished college he just kept lifting weights out of habit. About a year ago he and a friend were comparing measurements and the amount of weight each lifted. Well, out of their conversation they made a friendly bet to see who could increase his size and weight lifted in the shortest amount of time. Before either knew what had happened the bet was forgotten and both were serious body-builders.

The conversation with Harry helped pass the time, and before I knew it we were at Mack's Gym. While Harry went to change clothes so he could work out, I was ushered into Mr. Mackenthall's office. Since Mr. Mackenthall was friendly, we were immediately on a first-name basis. So we settled down and I started asking questions.

I found out there are many different reasons why someone goes into body-building. Some start because — like Harry — they lifted weights in school for sports and after school they decided to expand their weight-training program. There are some men who start because, like the classical 98 pound weakling, they are small and skinny and want to build their bodies and strength. Then there are the men on the opposite side of the fence; these men are over-weight and flabby and wish to reduce while they tone their bodies. Some men start body-building out of pure conceit: they body-build for the women it will attract. Mike said men start for different reasons, but after awhile a



Duane Derrick

psychological change takes place and all have the same goal in mind. That goal is to build and create the best body possible. There is always another muscle to build a little bigger, or tone a little tighter, or define a little more. After a while, the reasons a person starts body-building are forgotten and making his body its best is the only goal.

I asked what kept them motivated, what kept them coming back day after day, and why they didn't get tired of it. Mike said that in the beginning it is easy to keep motivated. In the first couple of months weight is lost or gained quickly and muscles develop rapidly. It is not unusual to see changes anywhere from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches either way every week. Because results are quickly noticed in the beginning this generally keeps them interested.

After about four to six months changes slow down and body-builders have to work harder to see any results. By this time working out has become enough of a routine that it is easy to keep at it. Mike says that since working out does eventually become a habit you miss it when you don't get to work out. But like everything else, you can get tired of it; a good idea is to take a week off every so often to prevent getting burned out.

I wanted another question answered: what happens when you quit working out? Do you turn fat? The answer was an emphatic **no**. Muscle cannot turn to fat; they are two different tissue masses. Muscles that are not kept toned up will get flabby and fat may build up around them. If you stop working out your muscles will get flabby, but probably not as soon as you would expect. Say you have been working out for a year, it would take your body about six months to return to its pre-work-out shape when you stop exercising. And the longer you have been training, the longer it takes for your body muscles to deteriorate.

Toward the end of our conversation, Mike got a phone call. While he was on the phone I watched through the window some of the guys working out. Everywhere I looked there were weights going up and down, muscles dancing, bodies glistening with sweat, and teeth clenched with effort. All of this together with the sound of metal against metal and the sound of air hissing between the guys' teeth created a very awe-inspiring picture.

Now I already knew the meaning of **pumping iron**, or so I thought. I was quickly told that **pumping iron** was not the actual physical effort of lifting the weights. I was led into the work room for a demonstration and a definition of **pumping iron**. Lifting a weight a series of times consecutively (reps) causes blood to rush into the area being worked, making it feel swollen of "pumped" up. After the blood rushes to the area, making it swell, the muscle becomes tighter and harder, almost like "iron." Hence the term **pumping iron**.

When my demonstration was over, I began to feel rather awkward; after all I was standing in a weight room full of men dressed

only in shorts. I looked around and spied Harry, who had showered and changed after his work out. So I grabbed Harry, said goodbye and thank you and we left.

On the way back home I thought about what I had learned and what I had seen. I couldn't help admiring those men. Obviously their bodies are to be admired; they are works of art, tuned to perfection. These men are not only building their bodies, they are also building their confidence, and developing discipline and determination. Everyone knows these traits are important to anyone who wishes to achieve in life. Body-building not only builds bodies; it also builds character.

Sherry Killingsworth

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Statistically Speaking

I think I first began to either dislike or at least mistrust statistics when, as a lad, I found a statistic which informed me that more males were born than females. Yet, I lived in a town where the ratio of women to men was seven to one!

Upon graduation from high school, I found myself, statistically, in the upper one-quarter of my class. But upon reflection, if I were in the top 25 per cent of a system that ranked 48th in the country, I was statistically, not as bright as the person in the lower 15 per cent in a system that ranked 24th in the country. Now those kind of statistics do wonders for the ego.

Then I found that statistically, men are stronger than women. Ask any male who has ever tried to follow a woman through a "50 Per Cent Off Sale" if he believes that statistic!

As I peruse the paper and watch the evening news, I have thrust at me the statistic that 15 per cent of the populace is unemployed. But this statistic blithely ignores the fact that 85 per cent are working. Yet, the same alarmist who use the 15 per cent unemployment statistic, spend 12 minutes of each 30 minute newscast trying to sell those unemployed a product. No wonder reason has taken leave. What self-respecting reason would hang around that sort of logic?

We seem a nation obsessed or possessed by statistics; I haven't figured out which. Athletics is judged not for its quality but for its win-loss record. Jobs are accorded graduates not on their knowledge, but their class standing. If a graduate knows something that is even better, but most important he rated high statistically.

Statistics show that you magically become a better driver on your 21st birthday, if you are male, and that you improve even more in your driving skills if you get married. That statistic is based, I suppose, on the premise, that two drivers are better than one, even if one does occupy the back seat.

Tell your insurance company that your household has ceased to smoke and your rates will go down. The fact that you sent your wife to cooking school and she no longer uses the kitchen as a crematorium will be of no consequence to his book of statistical averages.

We are a nation where the average family has two and two-thirds children. While I have never met one of these two-thirds children, I suspect it is a real burden on the mother.

We are a nation gullible enough to tell our legislature to allow the oil companies to increase their prices provided they pay a 5 per cent windfall profit tax. We were so blinded by the idea of sticking an ad-

ditional 5 per cent tax on the oil companies that we failed to realize the oil companies were sticking us 95 per cent.

We are taught from early childhood to cultivate numerous friendships. It is a foregone conclusion that the more friends one has the better he is liked and the higher his standing in the community. But bear in mind, regardless of the number of your friends, the civic groups you work with or your standing in the community, the number of people who will attend your funeral will be determined by the weather and time of day.

Statistics show that 80 per cent of all violent crimes involve the use of firearms. Yet, if we attempt to limit guns we are told "guns don't kill people, people kill people."

Hence, to cure the problem we should eliminate people. But there is a flaw in this simple cure. Were we to eliminate people we would all be reduced to that which can never be trusted — statistics.

Ron Kelly

Christmas Without Grandpa

Christmas Eve is always an extra special occasion around my house. It's the time when all the family — from near and far — gathers to share this special day.

We have a big turkey dinner complete with all the trimmings. Grandma always brings the chicken and dumplings, Sis the cornbread dressing, and Aunt Ruth the sweet candied yams. We all act like pigs trying to get to the trough to eat first — reaching for this, grabbing for that. But everyone manages to get plenty.

After we've eaten all we can hold, we all gather in the living room just to enjoy each other's company. But Grandpa is always the highlight of Christmas Eve.

Each year the routine seems the same. Dad pokes the fire and settles into his favorite chair. He lights his pipe and the faint aroma of cherry tobacco eases its way into every corner of the room. Mother sits on the braided rug at his feet and Grandma pulls the rocker over to the fire where we children and Grandpa are roasting marshmallows. And every year Grandpa tells us just how to roast the marshmallows — "You put em' on the stick good and tight or they'll fall off in the fire. And be careful not to put em' too close to the fire or they'll burn. But most important, keep em' turning so every side will roast."

After a few hours of just sitting around the fire caroling, we have a piece of Grandma's hot apple pie. The smell of fresh apples fills the room. The lights on the tree blink on and off and the fire is glowing and warm. We turn off all the other lights; the room feels homey, peaceful.

The room is silent, as though time were standing still, with only Grandpa's squeaky little voice whispering the Christmas story. Even though we hear the same story every year, Grandpa always makes it seem like new. We all listen to every word as though in a trance. Then a log falls and brings us back to reality.

Now it is gift opening time. Grandpa always passes them out, giving an occasional HO-HO-HO that always manages to make us smile. And every year we can expect a handmade gift from Grandpa. Whether it be a simple Christmas tree ornament or a hope chest with beautiful carvings on it, we know that each little shaving of wood represents the love and caring he put into making it.

But this year things will be different — much sadder. The cheery little grey-haired man who always seemed to make Christmas a little brighter won't be there. He died a few months ago.

It's a little hard to accept the fact that we won't hear the HO-HO-HO he always gave or receive the handmade gifts he always filled with

so much love. But we have the beautiful memories that will be with us throughout our lives — at Christmas and all through the year.

Peggy Wilson



Carolyn Hutchinson

Don't Look Behind You

Sandra lay on her yellow-orange air mattress in the Florida sun, her beautiful bronze tan catching the eyes of the young life guards. She felt wonderful, and looked it, too. At 23, her hair was a fresh, honey-blonde; her figure was perfect, and she was in great shape.

Her eyes, a brilliant electric blue, opened in surprise when she was splashed with the cold water of the pool.

"Brent!" she laughed. "Where have you been?"

"Upstairs, admiring your beautiful body from the balcony," he said, and smiled. His dark brown eyes behind their dark, thick lashes, smiled with his mouth. He was a very handsome man, and he knew it. "I just came down to ask if I may have the pleasure of taking my gorgeous wife out to lunch."

"Oh, you," she smiled, and was rewarded with a passionate kiss from Brent. She opened her eyes and splashed him with the water. "Race you to the apartment!" She rolled off the air mattress and threw it at him as she made her way out of the pool.

After lunch, he went back to work, and she to their apartment. She had just stepped into the living room when the telephone rang. "Just a minute," she called. She locked her front door and ran to answer the telephone.

She picked up the receiver only to hear a dial tone. She wasn't surprised; it had been happening for the past three weeks now. Brent refused to believe her, and having the number changed hadn't helped, either.

As she turned to go to the kitchen, she noticed a small sheet of paper at the foot of the door. She walked over to pick it up, and a dead cockroach fell out of it. She squealed in disgust and read the message printed on the sheet of paper. The only two words were WATCH OUT. She unlocked the door and walked out to see if the author was anywhere around, but the corridor was empty, and all she heard was the sound of laughter floating up from the pool. She shook her head, closed the door, and threw the note and its sickening gift away.

She went into the bathroom to soak away some of the tension but written on the mirror in lipstick were the words: GET OUT WHILE YOU STILL CAN. She screamed and ran back into the hall to call Brent, but the line was dead.

A single wail whined out of her throat to an animal pitch and she ran to the door. It was locked. A yellow slip of paper tacked to the door read: TOO LATE?



Norman Cupit

Sheer panic was beginning to take over her senses. Up until just a moment ago, her life was just as normal as anyone else's. But now she was fighting hysteria.

"Don't look behind you."

The words were flat, unemotional, and they were Brent's.

"Brent? Honey, is that you?" she asked nervously.

"Just shut up and go to the kitchen." As she walked, he said, "You're too beautiful. Half the men in this building want you, but you don't care. You just make yourself more beautiful to taunt them."

"Brent, now you know that's not true . . ."

They had reached the kitchen, and she stood with her face toward the sink. "I thought you had gone back to work."

"That's what you get for thinking," his voice dripped with scorn and contempt. He gave her a martini glass full of hydrochloric acid. "Now. Be a good girl and drink this for me."

All her senses were screaming. This couldn't be happening. Brent was her husband, a kind, loving man who would never do her any harm. But still, she knew she had to say or do something. Suddenly she knew what she would do. She turned around quickly and splashed the contents of the glass onto his face. As he screamed, she grabbed her keys, unlocked the door, and ran down the corridor.

She banged on the door of a neighboring apartment and a little old lady answered. "I don't want any of whatever you're selling," she said.

"I'm not selling anything," Sandra said hurriedly, looking toward the apartment she had just run from. "Could I use your phone? Thanks." She barged in before the lady could answer and called the police. In a few minutes the wail of a police car's siren could be heard, and an ambulance wasn't far behind.

She ran to her apartment with the officers, but Brent was gone. They searched the apartment building and garage thoroughly, but still no Brent.

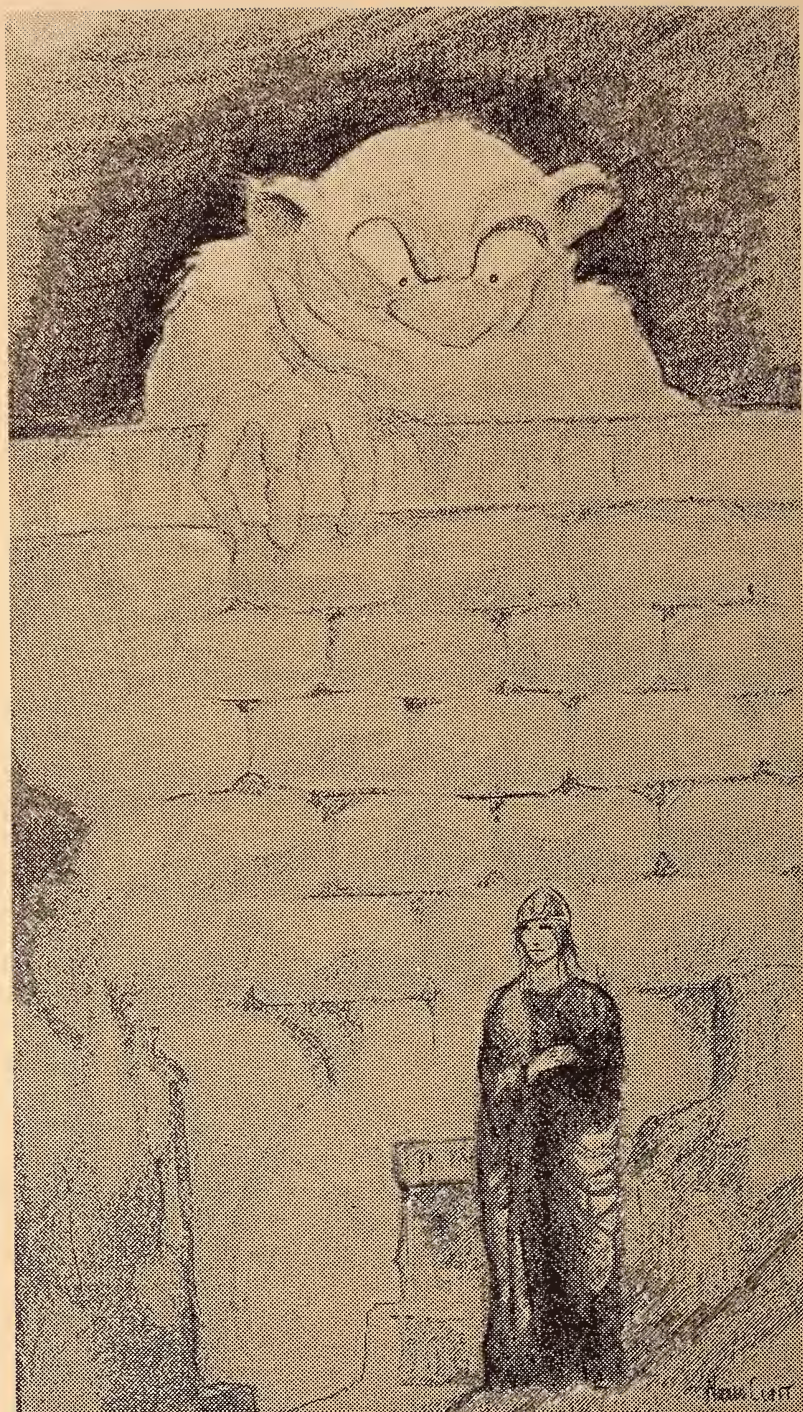
"But he was here! My own husband tried to kill me! Won't you at least listen to me?" she pleaded.

"Sure, lady, that's what they all say." They left. Not long after, she left, too. For good. She never saw him again.

Now, four years later, Sandra still wonders about Brent. Does he know where she is? Is he going to try again . . .?

Don't Look Behind You.

Terri Burnette
Wesson High School
First Place, Short Story
Junior Division



The Visitor

Loneliness enters my room and like a dark cloud hovers over me.

I shiver as the darkness and coldness he brings with him settles
in around the room.

Silently I ask of him why he's come.

"Because you invited me," he answers.

"Never," I reply, and pray for his quick departure, knowing that
his visits are never pleasant, and in the end only worsen
by misery.

"Oh, but you did," he softly says. He traces the pattern of roses
on my quilt with his icy finger. "Every time you shut your
world to those around you, push your friends away, or choose
a book over human companionship, you invite me in."

He gets up and with tired, old steps, makes his way to the door.

"I'll see you again soon," he promises ; then, he's gone.

"Good-bye," I whisper. I watch the rain that's begun to fall
outside form patterns on my window ; then, I weep.

**Elisa Allgood
Brookhaven High School
First Place, Poetry
Junior Division**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Each year the English Department of Copiah-Lincoln Junior College holds a student literary competition for college students and for area high school students. The college entries that win first or second in the various categories compete in the Mississippi Junior College Creative Writing Association competition and in other state-wide competitions. The college awards are listed after the writer's name in the body of *Microcosm*. Below are the winners in the junior competition.

THE JUNIOR DIVISION

Short Story -	"Don't Look Behind You,"	Terri Burnette, Wesson High School, first place Microcosm Scholarship award.
	"Katie's Last Wish,"	Rhonda Moore, Wesson High School, second place
	"A Ghostly Appearance,"	Toni Lee, Wesson High School, third place
Poetry -	"The Visitor,"	Elisa Allgood, Brookhaven High School, first place, Microcosm Scholarship Award
	"Mystery of the Sea,"	Christine Ann Poe, Brookhaven High School, second place
	"Leaving Home,"	Christi Finch, Monticello High School, third place

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The English faculty, the creative writing class and *Microcosm* staff judged the other divisions of the junior competition.

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